
Reasons for Recommending Against Consolidation

1. Idea of consolidation arose in Challenges for Change, and was dropped from that recommendation, apparently after reconsideration
2. State Depts of Housing and Community Affairs, which funds RPCs , and Economic Development, which funds EDCs, were briefly merged, and have now been restored to separate departments

3. Statutory bases are very different (have cites and language)

RPCs have very different and complex statutory bases (add cites), statutory membership and functions, and are charged with addressing the state's long term land use planning goals

EDCs have very limited statutory basis, members or functions, have no statutory members, very general and limited goals

4. Serve different clients:

RPCs serve member towns, the region and the state

Technical assistance in planning, mapping, transportation:

Towns, CV region, and perhaps in the future, the state

Disaster relief, information gathering, other ways

EDCs serve businesses, and towns by trying to bring new business development to towns, but what if a town does not want a business to locate a business where the business wants to go?

5. They have very different goals

EDCs have shorter term goals of bringing new business to area, increasing economic activity, good functions but may at times conflict with local and regional long range plans

Statewide land use goals apply to all levels of planning, municipal and regional
Statewide planning may soon again be under legislative consideration

6. When conflict arises: some fear that economic development will often trump planning, to the detriment of the towns and region in the long run

7. Some towns have expressed concern that consolidation will change CVRPC and make it less responsive to town planning needs (see attached list of functions CVRPC performs)

8. The case for consolidation has not been persuasively made

No description of how CVEDC and CVRPC work together. They actually do not do much together now, except for CVEDC Executive VP Sam's very able participation at RPC mtgs. Neither CVRPC staff or members attend CVEDC mtgs.

No description of how they will work better if consolidated, although there is no reason why they could not cooperate more without consolidation if they wished.

9. From the specific point of view of Montpelier: Much as I support Barre, applaud its renaissance, and am very happy that the VT DOE will be locating there soon, I think the CVRPC is appropriately located in Montpelier. The Montpelier Planning Commission and CVRPC have in the past and may again share an employee, and in any event work very closely together. They are physically located across an alley from one another. CVRPC is a very short walk to the State House and readily accessible to speak for RPCs in the legislature should the need arise suddenly.

10. Both CVRPC and CVEDC are now located in Montpelier. If they consolidate and co-locate, they originally proposed to do so in Barre. At present that would mean a loss of eight to ten employees in Montpelier.

11. Due diligence would require, at a minimum, review of financial statements, contracts with the State, and annual reports of both entities for at least the last three years.

12. CVRPC feels that the RPCs perform some of the functions that would be done by a county government if Vermont had active counties. Disaster relief is an obvious recent example. Does CVEDC perform any county-like functions too? Not addressed in proposal.

Other random thoughts:

In order to make service to the overall region more coherent, one could look at the range of regional services offered by an array of agencies, and see which would naturally work together on the same sorts of projects. For instance, the RPCs, the RDCs, the Act 250 District Commissions, and the Natural Resources Conservation Districts might work on similar issues and projects. It would be a substantial effort to investigate the best ways for them, and perhaps others, to work together. They also may all perform their functions better independently.

Note: The Montpelier Planning Commission met Monday, April 29, 2013, and approved the document above, with the addition of the following paragraph.

13. The Montpelier Planning Commission objects to the malapportioned representation on the CVRPC, under which each municipality has the same one vote regardless of its population or its financial contribution to CVRPV.

The vote was unanimous among the six members who were present: Jesse Moorman, Chairman; Eileen Simpson, Alan Goldman, John Bloch, Kim Cheney, and Tina Ruth. Only Jon Anderson was not present as he had to leave prior to the vote to return to work.

Submitted by Tina Ruth, Member, Montpelier Planning Commission
Montpelier representative to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission